a14 asbestos essentials

Non-licensed tasks

This information will help employers and the self-employed to comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

It is also useful for trade union and employee safety representatives.

Asbestos fibres can cause lung cancer and lung diseases.

The sheet covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It can act as a risk assessment for asbestos if it matches what you plan to do.

Follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

Only carry out this work if you are properly trained and have the right equipment.

Main points

- **Asbestos fibres can kill.**
- **Keep exposures low using all the controls in this sheet.**
- **Also follow sheet a0 and equipment and method (em) sheets; see 'Essential information'.**

AC sheets used as roofing

Removing asbestos cement (AC) sheets, gutters etc and dismantling a small AC structure

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice when you need to remove AC sheets, gutters, drains, ridge caps etc on a small scale, or dismantle a small structure (eg shed or garage).

This sheet does NOT apply for large scale work or mechanical demolition. A risk assessment and plan of work will need to be prepared.

This sheet is not appropriate if other asbestos-containing materials are present, eg lagging, limpet or insulating board. Use an HSE-licensed contractor for such work.

Preparing the work area

- Ensure safe access – you may need a mobile access platform.
- Restrict access – minimise the number of people present.
- Close doors. Use tape and notices to warn others.
- Ensure adequate lighting.

Caution: AC roofs are always fragile and cannot bear weight.

Equipment

- 500- and 1000-gauge polythene sheeting and duct tape
- Warning tape and notices
- Bolt cutter
- Webbing straps and rope
- Garden-type sprayer containing wetting agent
- Bucket of water and rags
- Asbestos waste container, eg labelled polythene sack
- Clear polythene sack
- Lockable skip for larger quantities of waste
- Asbestos warning stickers

Personal protective equipment (PPE) – see sheet em6

- Provide:
  - disposable overalls fitted with a hood;
  - boots without laces (laced boots are hard to decontaminate); and
  - respiratory protective equipment.

SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ✓ Can you avoid disturbing asbestos by doing the job in some other way?
- ✓ Do you need a licence for the work?
- ✓ Always follow all legal requirements.
- ✓ Follow the task guidance sheet.
- ✓ Use an asbestos waste container.
- ✓ Dispose at a licensed disposal site.

Caution:

- Don't sweep up dust or debris - use a Class H vacuum cleaner or damp rags.
- Don't take used overalls home.
- Don't reuse disposable PPE.
- Don't smoke.
- Don't eat or drink in the work area.

OTHER HAZARDS

Work at height – see www.hse.gov.uk/falls/index.htm. Take precautions to avoid falls. Must you work from a ladder? Where necessary, erect an access platform.

Work on fragile roofs – see www.hse.gov.uk/construction/index.htm. Fragile roofs cannot bear weight.

Electrical hazards – see www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/index.htm. Get a competent electrician to isolate and reconnect electricity supply.

Manual handling – see www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm. Plan how to remove and handle heavy material and articles safely.

Confined spaces – see www.hse.gov.uk/confinedspace/index.htm

Slips and trips – see www.hse.gov.uk/slips/index.htm. Floors protected with polythene become very slippery when wet.

There may also be other hazards – you need to consider them all.

Procedure

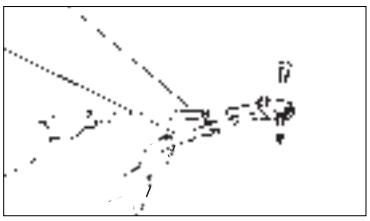
- Check with the premises owner that only AC is present.
- Protect nearby surfaces from contamination. Cover with 500-gauge polythene sheeting and fix with duct tape to non-asbestos surfaces.

Caution: It is dangerous to seal over exhaust vents from gas-fired equipment. Can the equipment be turned off?

Overlaying AC sheets

- Can you overlay sheets with non-asbestos material instead of removing the AC?
- If so, attach the material to existing purlins. Avoid drilling through the AC. If you cannot avoid drilling, see sheet a9.

Removal



Cut the bolts while avoiding contact with the asbestos cement

- Avoid or minimise breaking the AC.
- If fasteners hold the sheets in place, dampen and remove them, and place them in the waste container.
- If the sheets are bolted in place, dampen and cut the bolts while avoiding contact with the AC.
- Remove the bolts or fixings carefully and place them in the waste container.
- Unbolt, or use cutters to release gutters, drain pipes, ridge caps etc. Avoid contact with the AC.
- Lower large pieces to the ground. Don't drop them or use rubble chutes. Stack sheets carefully.
- Where there are several AC sheets and other large items, place them in a lockable skip.
- Double-wrap large pieces in 1000-gauge polythene sheeting. Seal with duct tape.
- Attach asbestos warning stickers.
- Place small pieces in the asbestos waste container.

Caution: Avoid crushing AC debris on the ground.

Cleaning and disposal

- Clean the equipment and the area with damp rags.
- Check for debris in fasteners or bolt holes. Clean with damp rags.
- Put debris, used rags, polythene sheeting and other waste in the asbestos waste container and tape it closed.
- Dispose of contaminated webbing and rope as 'asbestos waste'.
- Put the asbestos waste container in a clear polythene sack and tape it closed.
- Disposal – see sheet em9.

Personal decontamination

- See sheet em8.

MORE HELP

- **More asbestos pictures –** www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/gallery.htm
- **Help to decide if work is licensed –** www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/licensing/index.htm
- For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online or order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.
- These task (a) sheets and equipment and method (em) sheets can be downloaded free from www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm
- See sheet a0 for details of more guidance.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Download and follow these advice sheets from www.hse.gov.uk /asbestos/essentials/index.htm:

em1 *What to do if you uncover or damage materials that could contain asbestos*

em2 *Training*

em5 *Wetting asbestos materials*

em6 *Personal protective equipment (PPE)*

em7 *Using damp rags to clean surfaces of minor asbestos contamination*

em8 *Personal decontamination*

em9 *Disposal of asbestos waste*

Clearance and checking off

- Visually inspect the area to make sure that it has been cleaned properly.
- Clearance air sampling is not normally required.
- Get the premises owner, dutyholder or client to check off the job.

Further information

- *Health and safety in roof work* HSG33 (Third edition) HSE Books 2008 ISBN 978 0 7176 6250 0

This document is available at www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm

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This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.